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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC
RUCPDC/NOAA NMFS WASHINGTON DC
RUEAEPA/HQ EPA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUETIAA/DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHMCSUU/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMCSUU/NGIC INTEL OPS CHARLOTTESVILLE VA
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

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SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR OES/PCI, OES/STC, OES/SAT, OES/EGC, AND SCA/INS
STATE FOR STAS
DOE FOR INTERNATIONAL
INTERIOR FOR FWS RILEY
STATE PASS TO NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KSCA](#) [KGHG](#) [SENV](#) [TSPL](#) [TBIO](#) [ENRG](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: NEW DELHI EST OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS FOR JULY 27 TO AUGUST 07,
[1](#)2009.

[1](#)1. (U) Below is a compilation of environment, science, and
technology highlights from Embassy New Delhi for July 27 to August
07, 2009, including the following:

- Environment Minister Opposes Mining Project
- Arunachal Pradesh Civil Rights Group Opposes Hydro Power
Projects
- National Disaster Management Authority Publishes Chemical
Terrorism Guidelines
- GM Tomatoes, Brinjal and Cauliflower Coming to the Indian Market
- Billion Dollar National Solar Mission Making Slow Progress
- Department of Telecom Opens Up 13.56 MHz for RFID
- Insiders Report on Troubles with Chandryaan-I

ENVIRONMENT

Environment Minister Opposes Mining Project

[1](#)2. (U) In a major morale booster for conservationists opposing the
proposed Adani coal mining project in Lohara, located near the
Tadoba Andheri Tiger Reserve (TATR) in Maharashtra, Union Minister
of State for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh made a public
statement that no mining activity will be allowed near the tiger
reserve. Minister Ramesh gave the assurance to Maharashtra forest
department officials attending a two-day meeting of field directors
from 37 tiger reserves in India on July 25 and 26. Ramesh has used
this issue to demonstrate the Ministry of Environment Forests will
no longer be a rubber stamp for development projects.

Arunachal Pradesh Civil Rights Group Opposes Hydro Power Projects

[1](#)3. (U) Arunachal Citizens Right (ACR), a local civil rights group,

has raised concerns regarding environmental and cultural damage likely to result from proposed hydroelectric projects in the state. According to a right-to-information reply to ACR, the state government plans to build 135 hydropower plants, ranging from micro-hydro to mega-dams, which would provide 57,000 MW of electricity. The state is home to numerous small indigenous (tribal) communities whose rights have historically been protected via constitutional and legal mechanisms including entry restrictions for non-indigenous peoples. In addition to environmental concerns, ACR claims local communities believe the influx of the 400,000-500,000 out of state workers needed to build the 135 dams will damage the demographic and socio-cultural fabric of the state.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Publishes Chemical Terrorism Guidelines

¶4. (U) NDMA, India's national planning body for natural and manmade disasters, has released guidelines for management of chemical terrorism incidents. The guidelines (available at www.ndma.gov.in) provide background, procedures and protocols for use by designated agencies to prevent a potential attack, as well as methods for detection, protection against, and decontamination of chemical agents. NDMA has been among the most proactive organizations in India to address the issue of chemical, biological, and radiological (CBR) terrorism, and has been pushing Central and State governments and agencies to take CBR terrorism seriously. NDMA has specifically

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focused not only on response to disasters, but on prevention and mitigation efforts as well. While the guidelines provide solid advice, it remains to be seen whether the national ministries and state governments will overcome the policy and resource constraints needed to implement them.

GM Tomatoes, Brinjal and Cauliflower Coming to the Indian Market

¶5. (SBU) Minister of State for Agriculture K. V. Thomas formally stated during a parliament question hour session that genetically modified (GM) tomatoes, brinjal (eggplant) and cauliflower would be in the Indian market within three years. The Indian Council for Agriculture Research and the Department of Biotechnology have approved the three transgenic crops in the first step of a process which will require further field trials under clearances of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) and the Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation. In the same session, Minister for Environment and Forest Jairam Ramesh added the GEAC has also cleared for generation of biosafety data plants including rice, okra, potato, groundnuts, corn, cabbage, mustard and sorghum. Scientists from the Hyderabad-based DNA synthesis company Bioserve told ESTOFF they were in the process of developing kits for identification of GM crops including brinjal and coffee in anticipation of the regulatory approvals.

Billion Dollar National Solar Mission Making Slow Progress

¶6. (U) The National Solar Mission, part of the National Action Plan on Climate Change, while eight months overdue, made progress on August 3 during a meeting of the council on climate change called by Prime Minister Singh. The committee agreed, with conditions, to the ambitious 20.8 billion USD proposal to generate 20,000 MW from solar energy sources by 2020. The review committee suggested fine tuning the regulatory frame work, enhancing the research and development component for related technologies, and ensuring provisions for participation in the program by developed countries with well defined rules for capital investment and technology transfer. The technology focus has also shifted from solar photovoltaic to collected solar thermal. The final plan is expected to be released within two to three months.

Department of Telecom Opens Up 13.56 MHz for RFID

¶7. (U) Newspapers have reported that the Department of Telecom has announced it will join the U.S., Europe and Japan in opening up the 13.56 MHz frequency band, on a non-interference, no protection, and non-exclusive basis, to enable Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology development. This is expected to lead to new applications and reduced costs in diverse domains including logistics, security, health care, education, libraries, animal and other asset tracking, waste management, and environmental monitoring.

Insiders Report on Troubles with Chandryaan-I

¶8. (SBU) An ESTOFF contact familiar with the Chandryaan-I mission stated the problems troubling the orbiter, including loss of power units and an electronic bus management unit, and damage to its star sensor, was due to the failure of ISRO to conduct effective environmental testing on the components before launch. The contact also stated ISRO had been warned several times early in the mission about overheating and its consequences, but was more concerned with surpassing the Japanese in detailed imagery than in proper monitoring of instrument conditions which led to several of the failures. Despite the failures, Chandryaan I is expected to continue collecting data at an altitude of 200 Km for the next two

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years, and is generally considered a success within India. According to a statement made by ISRO Chairman Nair, one of the key lessons learned is the need for better radiation hardened devices. Further conclusions are expected to be drawn after a review committee meeting expected to be held in November.

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